

Michigan

MESSENGER

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President's Message

A New Challenge

by Michael Mize, President

I am certain that many of our members out there are wondering who I am and what happened to Jesus.

Let's start with what happened to Jesus. Jesus has resigned as President of the MPWU. He felt he could not keep up with the needs of the membership at this time and that it would be best to step down. We appreciate all the work that Jesus has done for the Union and its members. We wish him the best as we all move forward.

When the news came out that the position was to be filled by the Executive Board to fulfill Jesus's term, I was asked by another Union officer to step up. My original thought was that there was no way I could do everything and my wife would kill me. A little more thought and I realized that it is not an issue of doing it all but of delegating some of the non-President work I do so that ample time would be available to take on the challenge.

At that point a very important conversation had to happen. I had to discuss this with my family. I have taken on many things as a Union representative. But, anything that is this big of a decision has to be a family decision. Tammy, my wife, as always supported me in my decisions. A strong footing at home is important and without her support I would

never have agreed to my nomination. As always she absolutely supported this decision as well.

I accepted the nomination and upon winning the approval of the Executive Board I accepted the position as MPWU President to fulfill the open term. I have entered many different positions in my life, sometimes excited, sometimes scared and many

"We must work together to fight Management and the political powers that would take our rights away. Better unity is what I want to see, within the Union. After all the Union is you!"

other emotions. I have never gone into any other position that humbled me in the manner that this one does. The MPWU has had many leaders that I personally have a great deal of respect for. It is my pleasure to be your President and work for you.

Now about me, I believe we need to get to know who represents us. I have worked for the Service for about 18 years. I started as a Mail Handler working in the Flint P&DC and tested to switch crafts and become an Automotive Technician. I have been an Auto Tech in two facilities since 2003. I have been a steward for about 8 years and have been on an Executive Board at the Local level for about the same. I am the Flint MI Area Local President. I am married to Tammy and we have three great children,

one still at home. While I am in the Motor Vehicle Craft my wife is a Window Clerk and has been through the excessing from Flint. I have served on many committees for the Union and the members. My goal is to help the Union and the membership.

What I want to see for the MPWU is building that relationship with our members and Union officials so a stronger Union can emerge. We have sat complacently for too long and allowed Management to determine our fate. Standing up is not easy and when we never do it, it gets harder and harder all the time. We have more new employees in the Post Office

right now than we have had in a very long time. We have lost many of the original Union Officers that fought for that first contract. We need to get the new Postal employees to step up, learn the history and start the new battles. What we have to do if we are to survive the current attacks on our livelihood and lifestyle is fight back. If your contractual rights are violated you need to ask for help, ask for a steward. If you can step up in your area to help the Union, give it a shot. Bottom line, don't let others set the course of our future without putting your thoughts and fight into the mix. We must work together to fight Management and the political powers that would take our rights away. Better unity is what I want to see, within the Union. After all the Union is you!

Area 10 Director



by Vince Nichols,
Area 10
Director

Be Yourself

With this year's 1.6b National settlement and the issues of Postmaster 1260 hours, I want to take a moment to remind all clerks and especially small office clerks to use their own computer access, log on, and password, and use only programs you have proper authorization to use under your own identification. Do not access any programs through any other employee's identification. This would include logging in as the Postmaster. Many clerks are under the false assumption

that management and labor will turn a blind eye to the recent payouts being made. Postmasters have long falsified their work hours, this National grievance and arbitration award was about that situation in its entirety. Don't be fooled as all this money is being handed out, that clerks who are falsifying documents and hours, won't be disciplined for their falsification and dishonesty. When you log in as, or take over as the postmaster or another employee on a computer program, including the use of the Postmaster or employee's drawer, you are in viola-

tion. Also don't let the Postmaster or any other employee use your drawer, access, and identification. Some clerks in Illinois according to our NBAs have already been removed from the Postal Service for this conduct. You cannot justify, nor excuse your actions by saying you were just helping out the Postmaster or Office. If any of you have a Postmaster who insists that you use theirs or another employee's access or password, you should refuse. If you want to be cordial, you can ask them to put this order or request in writing. I believe that most likely

no Postmaster will do this for you. If they do, ask to see your steward or call your steward. If you currently have knowledge another employee has your password or believe there are other employees that have knowledge of your password, as soon as possible change and secure your password.

In our line of work sometimes honesty eludes those we work for, please don't succumb to this example of improper conduct. Remember to be yourself and to be the moral light. Make the postal service strong and protect your job.



President Michael Mize
 P.O. Box 1124, Flint, MI 48501-1124
 W: (810) 257-1534; C: (810) 444-7578
 U: (810) 239-0931; F: (810) 239-6879
 e-Mail: president@mpwu.com

Executive Secretary Michael Long
 U: (616) 977-1050; C: (616) 302-1409
 e-Mail: mdlblong@gmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce
 W: (810) 257-1530; U: (810) 239-0931;
 FAX: (810) 239-6879
 e-Mail: fmail1@comcast.net

Dir. of Edca. & Research Lucy Morton
 U: (248) 543-3262; C: (248) 660-3139
 e-Mail: lucyapwu56@hotmail.com

Editor Paul Felton
 U: (248) 543-3262
 e-Mail: pdf111@comcast.net

Legislative Director Roscoe Woods
 W: (248) 543-3262
 e-Mail: apwusteward@hotmail.com

HR/Injury Comp. Director Ron Krumrie
 U: (231) 933-1020; C: (231) 409-4906
 e-Mail: Olcubman@aol.com

Clerk Craft Director Thomas Lothamer
 U: (517) 677-6198; H: (517) 639-4873
 e-Mail: tlothamer@msn.com

Maintenance Craft Director Sterling Bouier
 W: (313) 964-1398; U: (313) 226-8685
 e-Mail: sbouier@apwudetroit.org

Motor Vehicle Service Craft Dir. Joe Wrobel
 U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 546-7146
 e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com

Veterans Director John Smeekens
 U: (248) 543-3262
 e-Mail: mpwuvetdirector@ameritech.net

Area 1 Director (480/481) Joe Wrobel
 U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 546-7146
 e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com

Area 2 Director (482) Marcus Smith
 W: (313) 226-8685; C: (313) 663-0269
 e-Mail: dmarcothegreat@yahoo.com

Area 3 Director (483) Robin Ely
 W: (734) 697-0047
 e-Mail: relyapwu480-481@charter.net

Area 4 Director (484/485) Angelyn Gebstadt
 C: (810) 516-2970; U: (810) 239-0931
 e-Mail: fmalveep@comcast.net

Area 5 Director (486/487) Amy Owen
 W: (989) 422-4110; C: (989) 619-6054
 e-Mail: Dewdrop1972@gmail.com

Area 6 Director (488/489) Mary Stephenson
 W: (517) 337-8753; C: (517) 980-6125
 e-Mail: mpwuarea6director@yahoo.com

Area 7 Director (490/491) Stefanie Murphy
 C: (269) 419-9322
 e-Mail: Spee65@aol.com

Area 8 Director (492) Wendy Kempke
 W: (517) 263-3795; C: (419) 377-4595
 e-Mail: kempke.wk@gmail.com

Area 9 Director (493/494) Lisa Borchardt
 C: (616) 706-1005; W: (616) 956-1072;
 U: (616) 776-1489
 e-Mail: Lisa.borchardt@ymail.com

Area 10 Director (496) Vince Nichols
 W: (231) 933-1020
 e-Mail: Vince00tc@yahoo.com

Area 11 Director (497) Laura Stafford
 W: (989) 732-6800

Area 12 Director (498/499) Theresa Granquist
 U: (906) 774-6303; C: (906) 396-6103
 e-Mail: tgranquist@att.net

P.O.W.E.R. Rep Jennifer Gilbert
 W: (616) 776-1542; U: (616) 776-1489
 e-Mail: Jennilee6@aol.com

State Retiree Chpt. President Al LaBrecque
 H: (989) 736-8173
 e-Mail: allab1937@gmail.com

MPWU Aux. President Vacant

MPWU Historian Vacant

MPWU Advisor Gary VanHoogstraten
 H: (989) 894-2656
 e-Mail: hystreet@att.net w



by Roscoe Woods, Legislative Director

Legislative Report

Reject The Slate

Legislatively there is not much happening with respect to postal issues. H. Res. 54 is still hung up in committee with all of the Michigan Republicans' signatures being absent from this resolution. I have been in contact with them all several times but the response is always the same – if I get one. We will consider it. Well even Nero fiddled while Rome burned – it's no secret to any of you how bad delivery is getting around the state and nation. So it is frustrating that as usual the important things that benefit this union and this nation's citizens (our customers) are stalled in a GOP controlled Congress.

On a national note, in early October the APWU joined civil rights groups, labor organizations and financial reform groups on Sept. 30 in urging Senate leaders to reject a slate of nominees to the USPS Board of Governors.

In a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Harry Reid, they wrote, "Our organizations are in agreement that it would be preferable to continue with a stripped-down Board of Governors than to fill those vacancies with a slate that includes nominees whose policy stances would be harmful to the USPS and ultimately to the public it serves." Only three of nine governor slots are filled. Members of the board are appointed by the President and must be approved by the Senate, which plans to consider four nominees as a package.

Even it seems the Democratic controlled Executive Branch is failing to add to the board representatives whose core function is to protect this service, not implement and advance an agenda that destroys it.

From the APWU Web – Signing the letter were Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil

Rights; Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO; Lisa Donner, executive director of Americans for Financial Reform; Janet Murgia, president and CEO of National Council of La Raza; Mike Calhoun, president of the Center for Responsible Lending, Hillary Shelton, vice president of the NAACP; Lee Saunders, president of AFSCME; Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League; Melanie Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; Mary Kay Henry, president of SEIU, and APWU President Mark Dimondstein.

"Given the harmful effects of payday lending on the communities we represent, and given the value of and need for a vibrant, public Postal Service that provides affordable, universal mail service to all – including rich and poor, rural and urban, without regard to age, nationality, race, or gender – we are especially troubled by the nominations of Mickey D. Barnett, who has previously worked as a lobbyist for the payday lending industry, and of James C. Miller, III, who dating back at least to his tenure as director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from 1985-88, has strongly supported privatizing the Postal Service."

The groups said they were especially concerned about Mr. Barnett's ties with payday lending industry because of "the close relationship between the USPS and the communities of color that have been disproportionately affected by payday lending and other predatory forms of credit.

"Because the USPS is located nationwide in both urban and rural areas, it serves as an important employer in these communities and a potential lifeline to other essential services. It is no surprise that a Gallup poll released in November 2014 shows that Americans deliver high marks to USPS, rated highest out of 13 major federal agencies. This suggests the public's willingness to consider the

USPS as a potential venue for an array of important financial services.

"We would be deeply troubled if anyone confirmed to a leadership position within the USPS used that position to promote the sorts of practices we have seen in the payday lending industry, or to block the advancement of alternatives.

"Mr. Miller, on the other hand, has been clear about his own troubling preferences for the future of the U.S. Postal Service," they wrote. "Speaking at his 2012 Senate confirmation hearing on his second nomination to the board, Mr. Miller stated that 'I think it would be best for the world, for the economy, and for the American people if the Postal Service was de-monopolized and privatized.'

"Our organizations believe that a public Postal Service is vital to our democracy and to commerce. While proponents of privatization point to cost savings and efficiency, recent examples such as the privatization of parking meters in Chicago cast serious doubt on these assertions. Furthermore, recent studies show that outsourcing government functions lead to a weakened infrastructure, insufficient oversight, crumbling tax bases, and a decline in wages and benefits. Privatization of our public Postal Service also undermines a fundamental tenet of democracy: a network that allows universal and affordable civic and political discourse, binding together each and every household in the country.

"At a time when the future of the USPS is unclear, largely because of Congress's inability to pass a comprehensive reform bill, it is especially important that the Board of Governors be composed of individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to the public service role of this great institution, and who have shown an openness to exploring all reasonable, public service-oriented options which might contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the USPS."

"We must urge you to reject the current slate of nominees," the letter concluded.

I encourage you all to call your local representatives, ask them to support these issues in the House and Senate.

As your Legislative Director I ask you to stay tuned, as fall leads to winter and winter leads to spring this coming year will certainly leave me with a lot to report.

In solidarity.

The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

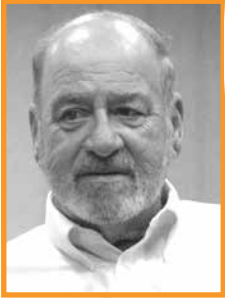
Battle Creek	480-481	Ludington	Stevensville
Central MI	498-499	Muskegon	Traverse City
Cheboygan	Gaylord	Roger City	Troy Local
Detroit District	Great Lakes Area	486-487	Western MI
Farmington	Mail Haulers	Sault Ste Marie	
Flint	Jackson	Southwest MI	

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to Paul Felton, PO Box 361342, Grosse Pointe, MI 48236. Articles must be signed to be printed (your name may be withheld upon request). Articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.



Retiree Involvement



by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

"If there was one decision I would overrule, it would be Citizens United. I think the notion that we have all the democracy that money can buy, strays so far from what our democracy is supposed to be."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg
Sept. 28, 2014

Sticker Shock. 'Tis the season when retirees wait in expectation for the rate of annuity and Social Security Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases, and with bated breath over what our FEHBP health insurance plan and Medicare premium increases will be. Well, wait no longer! Although the final calculations for COLA aren't official at this writing, every indication is that there will be NO COLA increase for 2016 Social Security or federal/postal annuity recipients. Diet ZERO COLA!

Medicare premiums are a mix. Current Social Security recipients who are Medicare eligible are by law "held harmless" from a rate increase when there is no increase in COLA. So the premium for 70% of Medicare recipients will remain at \$104.90 per month. That's the "good" news. For about 30% of CSRS Medicare eligibles who do not receive S.S., the premiums will jack up to \$159.30! Anyone becoming Medicare eligible in 2016 will also be paying the higher premium, a 52% hike. It's estimated that without the "hold harmless" provision, all Medicare recipients would have seen a premium increase to \$120.70. Basically, CSRS retirees who do not receive a S.S. benefit are being gouged to pay for the entire Medicare premium increase. There's legislation being introduced to provide some relief for this huge inequity that almost exclusively targets CSRS and public worker retirees who didn't pay into S.S. or do not have the minimum of 40 quarters of S.S. earnings. Yes, IT STINKS! If this adversely affects you, don't just cuss 'n moan; contact your Members of Congress now!

In Sickness or Health. Let me state right off the bat; I DO NOT 'SELL' insurance, not our APWU Health Plan, nor any other FEHBP plan or insurance, period! Insurance in my view is a necessary evil; damned if you do, really damned if you don't! I am a member of the APWU Health Plan, and it's been extremely good for us. This Open Season for retirees will require much closer attention. In the past, if you were satisfied with your cost and coverage

you didn't have to do anything. But, for 2016 there's a new option; "Self Plus-One". We've also been waiting with bated breath for this if there's just two in the family, expecting there would be a break for married couples or an enrollee with a dependent, rather than paying the previous option of Self & Family. I had a sneaking suspicion this Self Plus-One wasn't going to be the reduced premium we hoped for and I was right. I just didn't anticipate how little "savings" it would be.

APWU High Self Plus-One 2016 premium is \$335.98. The 2015 High Self & Family was 316.83. If you're Self Plus-One eligible, your APWU premium will increase \$19.15 per month. Some "option," huh? But, for those stuck with High Self & Family the increase is \$150.30!!! Make comparisons with other FEHBP Plans before being too hasty to switch to another carrier. BC/BS makes APWU look like a good deal! I would venture to say there will be considerable discussion over rate increases across the board and a lot closer scrutiny after we've had time to digest the damage. And there's no inflation to trigger a COLA increase?! The hurrieder we live in retirement the behinder we get! Someone has A LOT of explaining to do! Dare I commit heresy and direct attention to the NALC Plan rates? Watch for the FEHBP Open Season dates, generally from mid-November to mid-December when changes in options can be made, including those opting for the Self Plus-One.

National Retiree Delegates. My previous column was decidedly critical over the debate of whether national APWU would authorize the 5 elected National Retiree Delegates to attend the 2015 All-Craft Conferences in Las Vegas, Oct. 12-14. Debate in the general session during our MPWU 2015 Education Assembly left the question up in the air with President Dimondstein and Sec.-Treas. Powell. I don't know if any other of the National Retiree Delegates advocated to send we five with necessary expenses, or any other Retiree Chapter spoke out, but we sure did. And, when I say "we" it was State Chapter Exec. V.P. Paul Browning who took the microphone to raise and debate the issue. Pleasantly surprising is that after the President and Director, Judy Beard discussed the matter back at APWU Headquarters, the five elected National Retiree Delegates ARE authorized to attend the All-Craft Retirees' Conference. So, I recant my rather harsh assessment of the leadership mindset regarding Retiree Involvement, at least on that issue, and I strongly recommend that my fellow Retiree Delegates make a

point of thanking Brother Browning for his advocacy and Director Beard for her recommendation to the President. Ironically, and deeply regretted; Al LaBrecque, as your elected Central Region Retiree Delegate, is unable to attend due to personal health treatment reasons. However, never fear, Al will be there. I've taken the liberty of arming Michigan State Retiree Chapter V.P. Browning, and our State Chapter delegates with several proposed subjects for paramount Resolutions to the 2016 APWU National Convention. Copies were furnished to three other of the National Retiree Delegates and Director Beard for discussion during the All-Craft Retirees Dept Conference general sessions. I won't be there in person, but definitely in spirit. Depending on feedback, those proposed subjects for Resolutions will be subject of the next R.I. column.

Musical Chairs! First, it's my distinct pleasure to welcome and congratulate Brother Michael Mize as President, Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO! Mike hails from my home Flint MI Area Local where he currently serves as Local President. Mike is the third FMAL president to be elevated to State President, following in the large footsteps of Leo Persails, and the late Clyde Hartshorn, Jr. He will be filling the unexpired term of MPWU President until the 2016 election at the MPWU State Convention, and knowing his dedication to hard work, to his Union and extensive experience working intimately with all crafts, I've every confidence he will be just as dedicated and effective in his new responsibilities.

I've been advised by current Saginaw 486-487 Area Local Retiree Chapter President, Ricky Brown, that election of officers was held at a recent Chapter meeting electing Brother Thomas Gillespie as the new Local Chapter President effective Jan. 1, 2016. Welcome Brother! I have to say that Rick has done an exceptional job of re-energizing the Saginaw Chapter, and I expressed my disappointment that he was stepping aside. Rick's reasons were sound, and he assured me that he would remain in an active and advisory capacity. We assure Brother Gillespie that the State Chapter will be at your service in any way we can. I'm as far away as the phone or e-mail, so don't hesitate.

I've covered all my "sins" but one, and that's what I refer to as the "Generation Gap" which I will address in this next column (unless it gets bumped for more urgent rants). For a hint; some of us old fogies are running out of time, and if Retiree Chapters are to survive and thrive, younger retirees must consider stepping up; many of whom have a lot of Union gained experience and knowledge to offer although that's not altogether necessary or a qualification. Serving is a rewarding endeavor, not at all as stressful or time consuming as a Local or State Union officer, Steward, or activist on committees. Examine your conscience 'youngsters'. It ain't all goin' fishin' or sleeping in! Remember: Just because you're retired, you're NEVER out of the arena! If you don't believe me, just re-read the first four paragraphs of this column!

Be Strong!

District Meeting

by Lucy Morton
Director, Research & Education

Just as a reminder, our Area 10, 11 & 12 District Meeting will be held at the Grand Traverse Spa & Resort on Friday and Saturday, October 30th & 31st. This meeting will start on Friday at 11:00 am and go until 5:00 pm., and Saturday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and will address executive leadership and responsibilities and also cover some aspects of the fiduciary responsibilities that we are all responsible for as union officials and officers.

We have been lucky enough to have the National Director of Research & Education, Ms. Joyce Robinson agree to come and teach this class and we may

also have Roosevelt Stewart from the National Secretary-Treasurer's office accompany her as well for the fiduciary portion of the training.

If you have never participated in a class taught by Joyce, you are in for a treat. She is an excellent instructor and I am sure that you will learn a lot from her. Be prepared, be on-time, and be ready to learn!

Please check the MPWU web page for further details under "upcoming events." Please register early so we know how many we can anticipate attending and also have the proper amount of materials for class presentation. We look forward to seeing you there.

Editor's Report

An Activist Conference



by Paul Felton, Editor

We were just a block from the state capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin. The scene of a great worker/farmer/community uprising in 2011. The scene of ongoing protests every weekday since March 11, 2011. We joined the protests. Twice.

This was no ordinary Editors Conference. Our union is changing its culture. We are becoming more active, and we are building alliances. Supporting other peoples' struggles so they'll support ours. It isn't just about filing grievances anymore. The attacks we face can't be fought with grievances alone. That new direction, and new energy was evident at the Postal Press Association Conference from August 19-22.

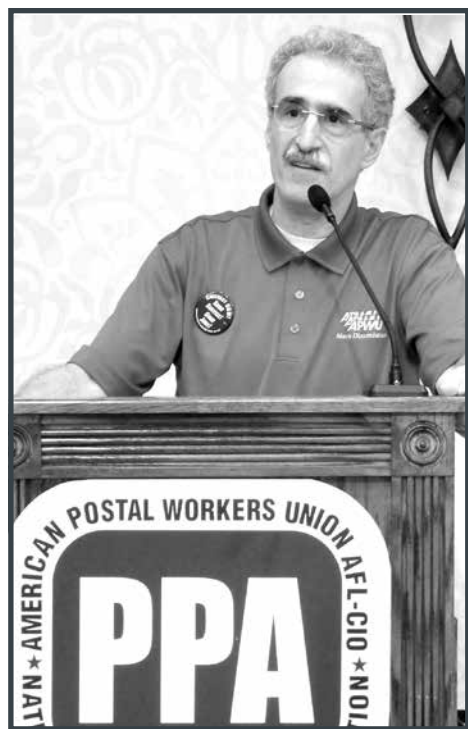
Solidarity Sing Along

Every day, a group of a few dozen protesters gathers at the capitol building from noon until one. They sing labor songs, with new verses, like: *They say that in Wisconsin, There are no neutrals there, You're either with the workers, Or with the Billionaires.* Many of the songs are about their union busting Governor, Scott Walker. They've been at it for four years. Sometimes inside the capitol building, sometimes on the lawn. We joined them for one of each.

While we're talking about singing, we were entertained twice by a labor activist singer/songwriter Anne Feeney (who I met at a labor struggle many years ago in Decatur, Illinois).

Puppet Theater

Instead of child care that simply looks



Mark Dimondstein answered questions from Editors at the press conference.

after the kids, the children rehearsed for a puppet theater presentation that they performed on the last day of the conference. Their presentation told the story of an African-American postal worker and World War I veteran who moved with his family into a previously all-white neighborhood in Minneapolis after returning home from the war. Racist mobs of as many as 3,000 people threatened Arthur



The Solidarity Sing-along protest at the State Capitol was a highlight of the PPA Conference.

Lee's family, and the police were not helpful. His coworkers at the post office rose up to defend his home and family; a majority of these coworkers were white. It was a timely topic with racist violence being so prevalent today (or maybe no more prevalent than in the past but today it is often caught on someone's camera phone). In any case, even the children were activists.

Activist Workshops

Some of the workshops were geared towards activism. In one workshop, we studied the Chicago teachers' strike of 2012, in which the membership was mobilized and alliances built with the community. Normally, in a teachers strike, the parents are upset at the teachers. But the teachers built the alliance over a period of many months leading up to the strike. The parents realized that the teachers were fighting against school closings, for smaller class size and, in short, for a better education for the kids. The community sided with the teachers and this forced the Mayor to back off of some of the attacks. Our workshop looked at some of the material the teachers' union used to mobilize the ranks.

In another workshop we did some role playing in which we took turns answering questions from the media. I was one of the volunteers. I was asked a question about the issues facing postal workers and I did my best to give a 20-second response. I said management is closing mail processing centers which not only affects our members but delays the mail 2-3 days.

John Marcotte

Our National Legislative Director gave a presentation that focused on national politics. One interesting point he made

is that a number of states passed progressive ballot initiatives, such as raising the minimum wage, while electing right wing candidates whose views are the exact opposite. The American people are more progressive than we think, though you couldn't always tell it from the corporate media. The 2016 elections are going to be very important to postal workers.

Ruth Conniff

We heard a talk by Ruth Conniff, Editor of the *Progressive* magazine, with the theme of defending the public good against private greed. She talked about the Wisconsin uprising of 2011 that inspired her children. She said Scott Walker's popularity in Wisconsin is falling, as people see the disastrous results of his policies, even as he campaigns for the chance as President to do to America what he did to Wisconsin. She drew a parallel between the attack on public education and teachers and the attack on USPS and postal workers. She visited private schools in Milwaukee in crumbling buildings with unqualified teachers – private is not better than public. She encouraged us as labor journalists to build the Grand Alliance to save the Postal Service.

Movie Night

For "Friday Night at the Movies," we saw a documentary by Robert Reich called "Inequality for All." The film talked about the humongous and rapidly growing gap in wealth between the top one percent and the rest of us who are struggling. Not only is this immoral, but it is not good for the economy. A vigorous and wide ranging discussion followed.

Press Conference

National APWU President Mark Dimondstein made himself available for a press conference. This is a tradition at Postal Press Association conferences, but this was the most extensive one I've seen. Subjects ranged from the Black Lives Matter movement, to Bernie Sanders (more on that later), to some national grievance settlements, to the new Postmaster General, to, of course, the contract struggle.

Contract Update

Mark surprised me by saying a negotiated settlement is possible; even if by the time you read this we are headed to arbitration, the parties can still negotiate a settlement at any time. The parties have agreed on many non-economic items, but management wants a new lower tier for new employees which Mark says he will never agree to. Management also wants economic concessions from current employees. That is also a non-starter. However, he said the new PMG is open minded about bringing new work into USPS.

John Nichols

John Nichols spoke at the awards dinner and he was a fiery speaker. John is a writer and radio/television commentator. He said when the Democratic candidates debate, we should demand of the moderator that one of the questions be about their plans for the Post Office. He said he knows Bernie Sanders will give a good answer but he wants to see how Hillary responds. He also said in gaining support for a thriving public Postal Service, we shouldn't emphasize the pre-funding of health insurance required by the PAEA and other explanations for why USPS is supposedly in the red. Instead, we should emphasize a positive vision of what the Postal Service can and should be, with expanded services like banking and with elections conducted by mail like they do in a few states. John also spoke passionately about the struggle in Wisconsin that exploded even after the *New York Times* said it was over.

Bernie

Not surprisingly, given the activist nature of the conference, the name of Bernie Sanders came up quite a bit. John Marcotte said there's no greater friend

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Roscoe Woods speaking about the APWU contract struggle at the AFL-CIO Convention.

AFL-CIO Convention

by Paul Felton, Editor

The Metro Detroit AFL-CIO held its convention on September 26th in Detroit. The Metro represents Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. Roscoe Woods, Tracey Kolassa and I attended from the 480-481 Area Local and Regina Favors attended from the Detroit District Area Local.

The Convention passed two resolutions that were submitted by APWU. One was to support postal workers in our contract struggle and the other was to oppose

the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and any candidate for national office who supports it. Both resolutions are reprinted along with this article.

Roscoe, Regina and I were among the people honored with awards for our activism. We were also reelected to the Executive Board – Regina is now a Trustee and Roscoe and I are Members at large of the Board.

We heard reports of struggles from various unions and also heard about community struggles. There was

a strong emphasis on building alliances with the community. One presentation that stuck with me concerned the Emergency Manager law in Michigan and how it resulted in undrinkable water in Flint (not to mention attacks on city workers in Detroit).

There also was an emphasis on preparing for the 2016 elections, which is obviously of great importance to the entire labor movement.

All-in-all, a worthwhile way to spend a Saturday.

Support American Postal Workers In Opposition To Postal Service Cutbacks

WHEREAS: The US Postal Service made a profit on its operations last year of more than a billion dollars, and

WHEREAS: Postal management is using a manufactured financial crisis as an excuse to drastically curtail service to the public, and

WHEREAS: The APWU contract

expired May 20, and

WHEREAS: The APWU is bargaining not just for wages and benefits for its own members, but for the customers, and

WHEREAS: The cutbacks being implemented and/or proposed will be disastrous for senior citizens, and

WHEREAS: Any attack on the jobs of

postal employees is an attack on veterans, and

WHEREAS: The USPS provides jobs at a living wage that contribute to the economy of every community in America, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO stands firmly behind the APWU

in its struggle to protect its members and the future of the US Postal Service and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO opposes all of the service cutbacks and will assist all of the postal unions in the struggle to expand service while continuing to provide good jobs to every community in America.

Oppose Support Of Candidates Who Support The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

WHEREAS: The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), like NAFTA and similar deals in the past, would result in the loss of good jobs in America, and

WHEREAS: The TPP allows foreign corporations to invalidate our laws if they claim it will harm their profits, and

WHEREAS: The TPP would likely lead to further privatization, and

WHEREAS: The TPP would give free reign for multi-national corporations to trample all over workers, communities, the environment, and our democratic rights, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO goes on record in opposition to the TPP, and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO urges the National AFL-CIO to insist that any candidate for national office that we endorse should vigorously oppose the TPP.

An Activist Conference

continued from page 4

of postal workers in Congress. Mark Diamondstein considers Bernie a friend and hosted a Meet & Greet for Bernie to speak to leaders of more than 20 other unions. Ruth Conniff in response to a question had some positive things to say about Bernie,

including the fact that he has entered into a respectful dialog with the Black Lives Matter movement. John Nichols pointed out that the media is reporting on the crowds following Donald Trump but ignoring the even larger crowds Bernie is drawing.

Awards

I am happy to report that the MPWU won two awards. I won the overall excellence award for the *Michigan Messenger* (July-August 2014 issue) and Mike Long won the award for best web site (for the MPWU web site). In addition, two Editors

in Michigan won awards: John Greathouse, Editor of the *Pacer*, won the award for best cartoon, and I won an award for creative writing in the *Communicator*.

All-in-all an exciting, stimulating, activating and rewarding conference.



Delegates at the AFL-CIO Convention.

DEADLINE

The deadline for articles for the November-December issue of the *Michigan Messenger* is November 16

Veterans' Report



by John P. Smeekens,
Veterans
Director

Veterans' Day 2015

Veterans Day is when we are asked to take time to Honor our living Veterans. There are usually parades, a few places even offer free or discounted meals for Veterans. A car wash by my house gives Veterans a free wash job on this special day. Well for me, I like to do what I feel means the most to our Veterans. Whenever I see a Veteran, no matter what age, era, or time of year, I usually approach them and say, "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY. WELCOME HOME!" So to all my Brothers and Sisters who are Veterans, "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY, AND WELCOME HOME!"

VA Expands Review for Camp Lejeune

As part of the VA's ongoing commitment to provide care to Veterans and their families, the Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that it will start the process of amending its regulations to establish presumptions of service connection for certain conditions resulting from exposure to contaminated drinking water at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. This process is in addition to the healthcare VA already provides for 15 conditions to eligible Veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987 as a result of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. VA also provides reimbursement of healthcare expenses for those 15 conditions to eligible family members who resided at Camp Lejeune during that time period. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently met with Senators Isakson, Burr and Tillis and the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to discuss the creation of presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The diseases that are currently being reviewed for potential presumptive service connection include kidney cancer, angiosarcoma of the liver, and acute myelogenous leukemia, which are known to be related to long-term exposure to the chemicals that were in the water at Lejeune from the 1950s through 1987. The chemicals are Benzene, Vinyl Chloride, Trichloroethylene and Perchloroethylene, which are known as volatile organic compounds, used in industrial solvents and components of fuels. ATSDR and VA representatives will meet at ATSDR offices on August

19 to begin discussions on establishing these presumptions. The VA will also work with ATSDR and potentially the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the body of scientific knowledge and research related to exposure to these chemicals and the subsequent development of other diseases. VA will carefully consider all public comments received when determining the final scope of any presumptions. Veterans with health problems they believe are related to exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune may file a claim for disability

"Cpl Dixon has quite a story and quite a personality."

compensation online at www.ebenefits.va.gov, or call 1-800-827-1000 for assistance.

For more information, Veterans and family members should contact the nearest VA healthcare facility by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune. For further information on Camp Lejeune: VHA Office of Public Health has a Website on Camp Lejeune historical water contamination at: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp.

The U.S. Marine Corps encourages all those who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune before 1987 to register for notifications regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater>.

New Ships Added to Agent Orange List

Recently The VA has added 22 new ships to the Blue Water Agent Orange List. Please go to the following web page for an Alphabetized list; <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp>



by Sterling Bouier,
Maintenance
Craft Director

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters,

Now that open season is over, ensure that your name is listed for any/all positions that you have become eligible on the appropriate promotional eligibility register (PER) for your facility. Be aware that once a position is available and the selection gets to your name, **you will be awarded that position unless you put in a written request not**

Veterans' Affairs Committee Approves Bills

In mid-September, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs considered and approved several bills related to programs and policies affecting the Department of Veterans Affairs. These bills include H.R. 677, which would allow for COLA increases to disability compensation to occur without needed action by Congress. H.R. 2915 would attempt to help end suicide by female veterans. H.R. 3106 would affect construction at VA by shifting larger

emony held Sept.11. "God has been so good," Dixon said. "He left me here with all these lovely people and all these nice things they're saying. I hope they mean it." Dixon is now the oldest living female World War II veteran according to VA records. She joined the military in 1943 and was stationed in both England and France with the postal services. She was one of the first African-American women in the Army as part of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion – the only unit of African-American women in the WAC to serve overseas during WWII. Dixon said, regarding the celebration that included flowers and gifts from family and friends, "This has been a marvelous day. I feel real special."

MIA Family Samples Needed

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is seeking the public's help to find and encourage more MIA families to donate a DNA sample to help speed the identification process of recovered remains. Currently, 89 percent of the Korean War's 7,800 MIAs have a family reference sample on file, 84 percent for the Cold War's 126 MIAs, and 81 percent of the Vietnam War's 1,600 missing. But for World War II, it's a dismal 4 percent of the 73,500 who are still missing. Each military service and the State Department has a service casualty office that can explain how to donate. For more information, go to <http://www.dpaa.mil/Families/ContactInformation.aspx>.

Flu Shots

The VA has announced a partnership with Walgreens drugstores to provide flu vaccinations for veterans enrolled to receive VA health care. This is a no-cost program for these veterans as Walgreens will bill VA for services. For more information on the program or to find a local Walgreens, visit: <http://www.ehealth.va.gov/immunization.asp>.

projects to the Army Corps of Engineers for management and appointing a special Assistant Inspector General for construction related issues.

Gulf War Veterans

The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center at the VA in East Orange, N.J., currently has several research studies focused on Gulf War veterans who deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Storm, as well as non-deployed veterans of the same era. If you are a veteran from the 1990-91 era, or if you have a Gulf War illness and would like to know more about the research, please call 1-800-248-8005 or visit their Gulf War Research page at; <http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/research/volunteer/nj-wriisc.asp>.

Oldest Living WWII Female Veteran

World War II Veteran Alyce Dixon, affectionately known as "Queen Bee" by those who know her and care for her at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center, is now 108-years young. Cpl. Dixon has quite a story and quite a personality. Fellow Veterans, volunteers, staff and family members celebrated her life at a special cer-

Maintenance Craft Director's Report

Open Season Update

to be promoted or stipulations for your promotion such as stating only tour 2 jobs or only N/S Sat/Sun jobs, etc... You may place this letter on your **record for a specified period of time** or you may **specify that it be indefinite until you request that it be removed in writing**. Please ensure that you keep and retain a copy of all correspondence for your own personal records.

Also, if you **participated in an exam during open season and did not**

pass, you are now eligible to update for that position under RMSS. Employees under the Revamped Maintenance Selection System (RMSS) shall be permitted to update by retaking the in-craft RMSS process no earlier than 120 days from the generation of their last MSS rating. Upon such request, the employer shall have thirty-seven (37) days to complete the process including **notification of the result to the employee**. The promotion eligibil-

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by Thomas
Lothamer,
Clerk
Craft Director

Clerk Craft Director's Report

Let's Talk About Money

Staffing is, has been, and appears will be the biggest reoccurring problem we have in the level 20 and below offices. As a result of this poor practice of staffing some battles have been fought and won by the APWU, and there is some language out there that should be cleared up.

Let's begin with clearing up mileage. May not seem like a big deal but may be costing you more than you realize. Article 36.2.B, page 156 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement reads, "Employees will be paid a mileage allowance for the use of privately owned automobiles for travel on official business when authorized by the Employer equal to the standard mileage rate for use of a privately owned automobile as authorized by the General Services Administration (GSA). Any change in the GSA standard mileage rate for use of a privately owned automobile will be put into effect by the Employer within sixty (60) days of the effective date of the GSA change."

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AND THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO

Re: Use of Privately Owned Vehicles
The parties agree that the following represents the policy of the U.S. Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union concerning the furnishing of privately owned vehicles (POV) by employees of the crafts represented by the APWU:

No craft employee represented by the APWU may be coerced into furnishing a vehicle or carrying passengers without the employee's consent. The use of a personal vehicle is the decision of the employee and it is not the intent of the parties to discourage such use of personal vehicles when transportation is needed from one postal facility to another or in the completion of the employee's assignment. When an employee begins his/her work day at one postal unit and is provided transportation to another unit to complete his/her tour of duty, that employee will be provided transportation back to the unit where his/her tour began if transportation is needed. If the employee ends tour at the new location the return trip will not be on the clock but transportation will be provided promptly by management upon request.

Date July 21, 1987

Simply translated, if asked, or requests to, work in another office for whatever reason you are entitled to travel time and mileage.

Additionally if you work in a level 15, 16 or 18 office this nice little chunk of change explained in the APWU.org website will be of interest to your pockets as well.

Clerk Officers Outline Criteria for Disbursement of \$56 Million Payout for 'Global Settlement' of Violations of Article 1.6.B

Web News Article #:175-2015

08/31/2015 - In a conference call with local and state presidents, the APWU's Clerk Division officers outlined the criteria for distributing the \$56 million lump-sum penalty portion of the settlement that resolves a decades-long dispute over postmasters and supervisors in small offices performing Clerk Craft work.

Clerk Craft Director Clint Burelson announced that:

- Employees in Level 15, 16, and 18 offices who were on the rolls as Part-Time Flexibles (PTFs) or who occupied Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT) assignments will be paid on a "share basis" for the period from May 7, 2011, to Dec. 5, 2014.

- Each week that a Clerk Craft PTF or Clerk Craft employee in a NTFT assignment was on the rolls during the time frame will count as one share. (There are a total of 187 possible shares. A total of 13,645 PTF or NTFT Clerk Craft employees were on the rolls at some point during that time frame. Each share is valued at approximately \$26.23.)

- A PTF employee or an employee occupying a NTFT assignment who was on the rolls for the entire period will receive approximately \$4,900.

- The initial disbursement will total \$44.8 million, with the remaining 20 percent to be held in reserve for errors, such as overlooked employees.

- The second disbursement of \$11.2 million will take place after the initial disbursement has been completed.

- The APWU expects to provide the names of the employees to be paid to the Postal Service in mid-September.

The goal of the settlement was to compensate employees who were not guaranteed 40 hours through the payments, Burelson said.

In addition to designating \$56 million for payment to Clerk Craft employees, the "Global Settlement" signed on Dec. 5, 2014, created a far simpler method for resolving subsequent disputes pertaining to postmasters and supervisors performing Clerk Craft work in small offices.

"The Postal Service has paid millions of dollars for violating the Collective Bar-

gaining Agreement since the settlement was signed last year," Burelson pointed out. "More importantly, the Postal Service has hired more than 1,000 members of the community as career employees to perform the work that was improperly performed by postmasters and supervisors. The hiring of career employees reduces the stress to employees working in understaffed post offices and will increase the quality of postal services to the people in local communities," he added.

Burelson thanked local and state leaders and Clerk Craft National Business Agents (NBAs) for their input into the decision-making process, and gave special recognition to Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, who took the lead on the project, and to Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, who assisted. He also praised the contributions of NBAs Bob Kessler, Billy Woods and Willie Mellen, and Mike Barrett of the Buffalo NY Local, who sifted through the data provided by the Postal Service and helped analyze it.

Burelson also thanked former officers in the last administration and the many representatives and members through the years that provided the foundation and leverage for the settlement.

At the Aug. 31 teleconference, Assistant Director Lamont Brooks explained the painstaking steps officers used to determine the best methods for disbursing the money. Other large-scale settlements going back to 1998 were reviewed, and various methods for distributing the payments were considered, he said.

Given the fact that more than 13,000 employees are involved and many vari-

ables are associated with the circumstances of each employee, the officers said they believe this was the fairest way to distribute the \$56 million lump-sum penalty for the violations of the global settlement.

The settlement is among the biggest in the history of the APWU.

Clerk Craft National Business Agents and Regional Coordinators have been briefed on the method of distribution. If you have any questions, please contact your local or state president, who will then contact an NBA if they are unable to answer the question. Updates on the process will be provided as they become available.

- See more at: <http://www.apwu.org/news/web-news-article/clerk-officers-outline-criteria-disbursement-56-million-payout-%E2%80%98global#sthash.ukZOGDmJ.dpuf>

So, if you are a PTF clerk in a level 15, 16, or 18 and you are working in other offices, you should be aware of these 2 very important impacts on your income. Call your steward for any further questions but if you are affected by the above settlement then you could potentially have about \$4900 coming before taxes and if you are traveling for work then mileage is 56.5 cents per mile plus time on the clock. So, pay attention and be alert. Additionally if one of your non-dues paying associates is benefited by either or both of these then please explain to them that this is due to the efforts of the American Postal Workers Union and we would very much like to sign them up and use their support. If they or you want to give us a call, we can talk about more money.

Open Season Update

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ity register shall not be updated during the period of time a vacant position is in the register in order of qualifications, and all positions for promotion awarded in accordance with the procedures established in **Section 5, Article 38**.

One last thing. Please ensure that your (Preferred Assignment Registers) PAR's are up to date and reflect the job assignments that you desire. If you have an old PAR in and forget about it, you may be slotted into a position that you no longer desire. If you are put into a position and you do not wish to move, submit a blank PAR to reflect your desire to stay in

your current position and avoid an unwanted position being awarded to you.

As always, feel free to contact me, if you are in need of my services. I am here to serve.

In Union Solidarity.



Don't rely on the internet. Attend your union meetings to get the real facts.

Turney at the Table



by **Linda Turney**,
National
Business Agent

*When you read, you empower yourself.
When you write, you influence others.*

Work Hour Limitations

Fall is upon us and Holidays are around the corner. Many offices are working lots of hours as I write this. It is important for us to tell our newest workers that ELM 432.32 and Article 8.5.G. puts limitations on working more than 12 hours and more than 60 hours in a work week in some cases. ELM 432.32 states:

Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the postmaster general (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

These restrictions apply to PSEs, there-

fore PSEs as well as PTFs and Full Time Regulars (FTR) who are NOT on the overtime desired list (OTDL) cannot work more than 12 hours in a day including their lunch. FTRs that are on the overtime desired list are the only exception. FTRs on the OTDL may be required to work more than the 12 hour work limitation as Article 8.5.G. states "work up to 12 hours in a day" therefore "work" would not include a lunch.

If a FTR does not want to work more than 10 hours in a day or 56 hours in a service week, the FTR should ask the Union steward how the local distinguishes them from working those hours. Per the JCIM, most locals put a star or asterisk by the name of the person who does not want to work all the hours. If management is requiring FTRs that are not on the OTDL to work, the FTR on the OTDL will be required to work more hours rather than not having NON OTDL people work.

Non Traditional Full Time employees (NTFT) are also subject to the 10, 12, 56, and 60 hour minimum except for NTFTs whose daily schedule exceeds 10 hours.

There is no limit on the number of days in which PSEs can work. The limitations

for PSEs are no more than 8 hours daily, unless the OTDL is not qualified or available and not more than 12 hours including lunch time.

The remedy for working beyond the 12/60 hour limitation is to ask for 50% of the base hourly straight time rate for all those hours worked beyond the limitation.

Keep Calm and Carry on at the Post Office

Two Union members are fighting over an APC. One wants to put it on the truck. One wants to use it to place water and headphones. They both have hold of the equipment and are screaming at each other over the APC. This dispute is not worth losing your job.

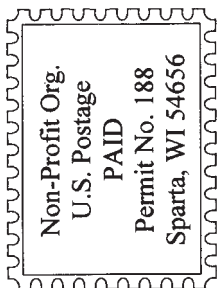
The supervisor won't give the Union member a day off for an important court date. She was writing the PS Form 3971 and still had the pen in her hand. While arguing with the supervisor, the Union member begins thrusting the ink pen in the face of the supervisor in a motion that appears knife-like. The Union member is given an Emergency Placement. This dispute is not worth losing your job.

The Union steward is working on Grievances in the study room. The supervisor insists on having the door open. The supervisor opens the door

and leaves. The Steward closes the door and goes back to her work. The supervisor comes back and opens the door. The Steward closes the door. The supervisor swings the door open again and hits the Steward in the head. The Steward goes to the Clinic and files for OWCP. This dispute is not worth losing the job.

It is sometimes difficult to keep your cool on the workroom floor. Please remind your members a verbal altercation will often lead to a removal.

Generally we lose our feeling of calm not because of one single event or situation. It is LOTS of little ones that over time build and develop into an overall feeling of overwhelm and resentment. Try to eliminate stressful thoughts before they build up in your mind. My Treasurer would always tell me to go breathe in a bag. She really was right. Whenever you experience moments such as a rude supervisor or customer or fellow worker, take a slow, deep breath in and hold it. Then expel the air as you envision all the stress including this irritating person leaving you. Do it three or four times and hopefully your blood pressure and good health and sanity will return to normal. It does have an extraordinary effect. Be the island of calm in our hectic and stressful work environment.



Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o Paul Felton, Editor
P.O. Box 361342
Grosse Pointe, MI 48236
Address Service Requested

NBA Report



by **Michael O'Hearn**,
National
Business Agent

\$56 Million Pay Out

A grievance was filed nationally concerning Postmasters and Managers improperly working bargaining unit work over the negotiated caps in the smaller offices. The Union won this grievance. Ever since then we have been negotiating about the monetary remedy for this grievance nationwide. The USPS agreed to pay out \$56 million. Our national officers have been studying how to pay this money out. On August 31, the national officers announced how this money was going to be distributed. Here is their decision. Employees in level 15, 16, and 18 offices who were on the rolls as PTFs or NTFTs will be paid on a "share basis" for the period from May 7, 2011 to Dec. 5, 2014. Each week a PTF or NTFT was on the rolls during this time frame will count as one share. A total of 187 shares are possible per individual. Each share will equal about \$26.23. A PTF or NTFT who was on the rolls the entire period in these size offices will receive about \$4,900. This initial disbursement will total about \$44.8 million. The Union hopes this payout will be completed before Christmas.

The remaining \$11.2 million will be held in reserve for errors, such as overlooked employees. A second smaller payout is possible after correcting errors. This is among the biggest settlements in the history of the APWU. For more information, go to the national website at www.apwu.org.

One Line Witticisms

I woke up and my girl asked if I slept well. I said "No. I made a couple of mistakes. – Steven Wright

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. – Mark Twain

If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your thing. – Milton Berle

I don't fly on account of my religion. I'm a devout coward. – Henny Youngman

I went to the boxing matches the other night, and a hockey game broke out. – Rodney Dangerfield

I spent seven hours in a beauty shop, and that was for the estimate. – Phyllis Diller

I'd horse whip you, if I had a horse. – Groucho Marx